

Difficult Passages in the New Testament
Warnings in Hebrews
November 17, 2020

Hebrews is a NT letter written to Christians that includes many warnings about the possibility of losing “salvation.” Many use these “warning passages” to teach that if a Christian is bad enough long enough, he or she will lose eternal life. Some also teach that these “warning passages” are hypothetical statements to keep true Christians from becoming lazy in Christian living because a Christian can never know for certain his or her eternal destiny until persevering to the end of life as a Christian with some unknowable, relative amount of holiness.

1. What is “salvation” in Hebrews?

Heb. 1:1 ¶ God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,

Heb. 1:2 in these last days has spoken to us in **His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things**, through whom also He made the world.

Heb. 1:3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Heb. 1:4 having become **as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.**

Jesus is a resurrected human being (and fully God) who has been rewarded with the title “Son.” Jesus is the King over all of Creation, Heaven and Earth. He is now ruling from Heaven. This resurrected Man had *inherited* the authority to rule over the angels!

If a resurrected human being is now running Heaven, what might God have planned for Christians when Jesus comes again to usher in the Messianic Kingdom?

Heb. 1:13 But to which of the angels has He ever said [*in Psalm 110*],
“SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,
UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES
A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET”?

Heb. 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out **to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation**?

Heb. 2:5 For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking.

Heb. 2:6 But one has testified somewhere, saying [*in Psalm 8*],

“WHAT IS MAN, THAT YOU REMEMBER HIM?

OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT HIM?

Heb. 2:7 “YOU HAVE MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS;

YOU HAVE CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR,

AND HAVE APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS;

Heb. 2:8 YOU HAVE PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET.”

For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.

Heb. 2:9 But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, *namely*, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

Heb. 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author [= Leader] of their salvation through sufferings.

Heb. 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren [= brothers, compatriots],

Heb. 2:12 saying [*in Psalm 22*],

“I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN,

IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE.”

Heb. 2:13 And again [*in Isaiah 8*],

“I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM.”

And again,

“BEHOLD, I AND THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN ME.”

God the Father’s glorious plan is to not only for Jesus Christ to rule and reign over Heaven and Earth, but to have many fellow compatriots, other human beings, to rule with Him! God the Father does not want His Son to be *alone*. God’s very nature is to give and share. Sharing wonderful things increases the joy of those things.

“Salvation” in Hebrews is the future deliverance of Christians into _____

_____.

Heb. 5:9 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,

Heb. 5:10 being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Heb. 9:28 So Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

To receive this “salvation,” Christians must _____ the King, the Leader of their “salvation” through any *suffering* they might endure. This future “salvation” of reigning with Jesus is an _____, and it must be inherited the same way Jesus inherited His glorious title, “Son” or “Kingly Heir.”

2. What is the negative example of *disinheritance* Christians must keep in mind from past history?

Heb. 3:12 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.

Heb. 3:13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Heb. 3:14 For we have become partakers [= partners] of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,

Heb. 3:15 while it is said [*in Psalm 95*],

“TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,

DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME.”

Heb. 3:16 For who provoked *Him* when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt *led* by Moses?

Heb. 3:17 And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?

Heb. 3:18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?

Heb. 3:19 So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.

Heb. 4:1 ¶ Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.

Heb. 4:2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

A generation of Israel was not allowed to _____ the Promised Land. Israel did not cease to be God's chosen people, nor was this disinherited generation doomed to hell. But that entire generation _____ (sometimes in sudden, large scale temporal judgments) in the desert over the course of 40 years, and they were also _____.

This *inheritance* is called a "rest" because Israel needed to do the hard work of conquering the Promised Land. But that generation did not believe in God's power over their enemies, and they lost their *inheritance*.

Num. 34:2 "Command the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you enter the land of Canaan, **this is the land that shall fall to you as an inheritance**, even the land of Canaan according to its borders.

Deut. 4:21 "Now the LORD was angry with me on your account, and swore that I would not cross the Jordan, and that **I would not enter the good land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.**"

Josh. 1:13 "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God **gives you rest and will give you this land.**'

Why is this example of history so fitting for our "salvation" of reigning with Jesus Christ as His partners, His compatriots? What is the warning for us?

3. How can we inherit this future, glorious "salvation"?

Heb. 4:14 ¶ Therefore, **since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God**, let us hold fast our confession.

Heb. 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin.

Heb. 4:16 **Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

Jesus is not only King, He is _____ and intercedes with the Father to get Christians all the help they need to persevere.

Heb. 7:25 Therefore He is able also to save forever [= to completely save] those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Heb. 7:26 ¶ For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;

Heb. 7:27 who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the *sins* of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

Jesus can fully get the help Christians need from the Father because He is also the sacrifice for their sins! Jesus can say, “Father, she needs your help and do not let anything hold you back because I died for all that is wrong with her!” **The requirement of the believer is to live by faith in one’s High Priest, and _____.**

Heb. 12:1 ¶ Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

Heb. 12:2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The “sin that so easily entangles us” is to “fall to the wayside,” to stop believing. Keep in mind that these Jewish Christians were tempted to leave their faith in Jesus behind.

They were going to “fall” and stop believing in Jesus. This was a dire situation.

4. What do the warning passages mean in Hebrews? What is the danger for Christians today?

Heb. 2:1 ¶ For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.

Heb. 2:2 For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty,

Heb. 2:3 how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?...

Heb. 6:1 ¶ Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

Heb. 6:2 of instruction about washings [= baptisms] and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

Heb. 6:3 And this we will do, if God permits.

Heb. 6:4 For [= because here is why we need to press on to maturity] in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers [= partners] of the Holy Spirit,

Heb. 6:5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,

Heb. 6:6 and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since [while] they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

Christians who do not “press on,” but make the choice to “fall away” and completely turn away from believing in Jesus and refuse to have anything to do with other Christians, such Christians have reached a point where there is nothing that can be done to bring them to repentance. Christians can not help them. They cut themselves off from their High Priest being able to help them.

The reason there is nothing that can be done is because that Christian has put themselves on the side of those who crucified and shamed Jesus at the cross! The people who put Jesus to death did not believe in Him and His death was *unhelpful* to them. Christians who turn away from faith in Jesus and stop believing in His death for their sins, put themselves on the side of Jesus’s enemies who crucified Him. For Christians who stop believing, Jesus’s death on the cross means nothing to them anymore. Jesus is dead to them. They gain no benefit from their living High Priest in Heaven who also is their once for all sacrifice for sin anymore! This is a real warning to believers to never get to this place!

Heb. 10:26 ¶ For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

Heb. 10:27 but a terrifying expectation of judgment and [in Isaiah 26] THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.

Heb. 10:28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

Heb. 10:29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

Heb. 10:30 For we know Him who said [in Deuteronomy 32], “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY.” And again, “THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE.”

Heb. 10:31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

**Just as their ancestors failed to believe and died in the desert, these Jewish Christians were in danger of _____
for turning away from living by faith in Jesus, the Heir of all things.**

Heb. 12:15 See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled;

Heb. 12:16 that *there be* no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a *single* meal.

Heb. 12:17 For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.